

AFGHANISTAN: PUBLIC DIPLOMACY ACTION PLAN

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I. Purpose

Our strategy must be a comprehensive one addressing the concerns of three distinct audiences:

- International public opinion
- Domestic U.S. opinion and Congress
- Afghans: resistance, refugees, population inside Afghanistan

The thrust of our public diplomacy strategy is twofold: (a) to keep the war in the forefront of world and domestic public consciousness; and (b) to counter the current Soviet political offensive which offers cleverly packaged promises of a settlement that places a Soviet-dictated political solution in Kabul ("national reconciliation") ahead of troop withdrawal, which is the key issue. Our public diplomacy efforts are one element in our overall policy of increasing the political, military and economic costs to the Soviets of their occupation of Afghanistan. They place paramount importance on maintaining the issue in the context of a North-South (i.e., USSR vs Third World) rather than an East-West confrontation and on involving other governments to a greater extent in supporting the Afghan people's cause.

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/AR

REVIEWED BY

RJS/STW 10/25/89

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II. Background

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Having failed in the past seven years to win militarily in Afghanistan, Moscow has launched a "peace offensive" which on the surface appears flexible and which has made some inroads in international governmental and public opinion, particularly in the Third World. The effort comprises: a) a "national reconciliation" policy which entails grafting selected non-communist elements, including some refugee and resistance representatives, onto the current communist regime headed by Najib; b) a six-month cease-fire and amnesty announced by Kabul in January but quickly rejected by the mujahidin; and c) a shorter (18-month) withdrawal timeframe at the Geneva proximity talks. The above constitutes the carrot of the Soviet strategy. The stick takes the form of increased border attacks and subversion against Pakistan in order to try to sway Islamabad toward a more accommodating stance vis-a-vis Moscow. The Soviets push the line that the U.S. is restraining Pakistan from accepting Moscow's proposals as part of a USG policy to ensnare the Soviet Union in an unending guerrilla war. Much of our public diplomacy to counter this Soviet strategy is carried out in the often uncertain and shifting turf of Third World public opinion.

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Support for the policy of increasing political and military pressure on the Soviets to withdraw promptly is strongest in the West and the Islamic world. This policy currently also enjoys support among a large majority of Third World states, as manifested in the annual UNGA vote on Afghanistan. Our public diplomacy seeks to maintain a high level of publicity on the war. We aim to keep public attention focused on the central issue of Soviet aggression and the need for the Soviets to commit themselves to a prompt withdrawal from Afghanistan. We consult closely with Pakistan on our public diplomacy plans and encourage other governments to become more active in this area. Our purpose, again, is to avoid a public perception of the war as being an East-West conflict by proxies. Domestically, the policy enjoys strong public and bipartisan Congressional support. Our objective here is to encourage greater media coverage of the war and support for Pakistan. We seek greater involvement of the private sector in support of various elements of our Afghanistan policy. We are working to improve the journalistic skills and public relations efforts of the resistance Alliance while at the same time enhancing the Alliance's image internationally.

III. Key Issues and Responses

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The activities in section IV constitute USG responses to the following key foreign policy objectives:

- Pressure Moscow into a comprehensive political settlement by raising the costs of their occupation of Afghanistan.
- Promote the Afghan resistance Alliance as an effective political front.
- Provide assistance to the Afghan refugees and to free Afghans remaining inside their own country.
- Encourage more active international support for the Afghan resistance.
- Increase international public awareness of the war and support for a free Afghanistan.

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IV. Activities and MeasuresPUBLIC AFFAIRS

We run the risk of foreign and domestic publics becoming inured to the eight-year-old struggle in Afghanistan. It could be accepted in people's minds as just another, ongoing Third World conflict which makes an occasional splash in the media but otherwise occupies a backburner in world events. The key difference with Afghanistan as compared to other conflicts, of course, is that the Afghans are battling a superpower directly. Our task is to encourage a high and steady level of publicity on the war, underscoring the strategic stakes as well as the human rights aspects. This effort contributes to our goal of increasing the political costs to Moscow.

Toward this end, our public affairs strategy comprises the following:

Interagency Working Group: The Interagency Working Group on Afghanistan Strategy (State, USIA, NSC, AID, DOD) coordinates government-wide efforts to maximize media coverage of the war and publicity favorable to the resistance.

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Public Themes: The Working Group recently produced "Public Themes on Afghanistan," a brief, public document which summarizes current USG policy on Afghanistan. USIA will incorporate the Public Themes in its regular programming. State arranges wide dissemination of the Public Themes domestically via the State Department GIST handout and the speaker program. State and USIA send the Public Themes to all posts with instructions to draw on them in their dealings with host country officials, academics, journalists, civic groups, etc. The Public Themes will be revised at regular intervals to reflect latest developments on Afghanistan. The next edition will focus on — .

Worldnet: A number of senior USG officials have already appeared on Worldnet to address Afghanistan, including Assistant Secretary Murphy and Undersecretary Armacost. USIA is in the process of lining up additional speakers. The agency is considering the possibility of inviting the Alliance spokesman to appear.

Cross-border Attacks: USIA will obtain film footage of the Soviet/Kabul regime border attacks against Pakistan and seek wide distribution of the footage to media outlets.

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VOA: (to be supplied by USIA)

Afghanistan Sitrep Briefings: The briefings continue to attract broad attention among a wide range of foreign and U.S. journalists.

Speakers: Afghanistan specialists at State give occasional presentations on the war and U.S. policy before academic and civic groups. Afghanistan is one of the core themes used in State's speakers program.

CONGRESSIONAL AFFAIRS

Afghanistan enjoys the enviable status among the Administration's key foreign policy issues of having strong bipartisan support in Congress. A number of legislators take a very strong and personal interest in the cause of the Afghan freedom fighters. We seek to keep Congress informed of latest developments in the war and to involve members in efforts to generate support for the Afghan people.

We plan the following activities vis-a-vis Congress:

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McCollum Program: As part of the humanitarian relief program sponsored by Congressman Bill McCollum, the USG (DoD) provides aircraft to fly humanitarian supplies to Pakistan for war-affected Afghans and to evacuate war-wounded Afghans for treatment in hospitals in Europe, the U.S. and elsewhere. State will query receiving governments on whether they would be agreeable to increased publicity of their role in this program.

Parliamentarians Conference: USIA is leading preparations for a conference of parliamentarians from select Western and Islamic states with the objective of drawing up an agenda of action items which the parliamentarians can take back to their respective legislatures. The conference, to take place in Europe, does not yet have a fixed locale or date. USIA is working with the Konrad Adenauer Foundation on the possibility of holding the conference in West Germany. Several U.S. legislators have taken a strong interest in participating.

Worldnet: USIA is scheduling several U.S. legislators from both political parties who are prominent on the Afghan issue for appearances soon. Sen. Humphrey is scheduled to appear on ____.

Congressional Afghanistan Task Force: State provides informal briefings for the group on border raids, refugees, the aid

ogram, etc.

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PRIVATE SECTOR

Numerous private interest groups and foundations take an active role in generating public interest in and support for the Afghan resistance and refugees. The USG works closely with these groups in this regard. We seek over the next several months to involve a number of prominent corporation and foundation executives and others in activities supportive of the resistance and the refugees.

Our private sector strategy encompasses the following activities:

Afghanistan Seminar: State will seek to host a seminar for prominent Americans aimed at raising private sector funds for Afghan educational programs. We will target corporations and foundations and encourage them to provide university scholarships and training opportunities for young Afghans, in Pakistan, the U.S. and elsewhere.

Benefit Gala: USIA's Director of Private Sector Committees will identify private individuals who might be encouraged to sponsor a benefit gala to raise funds to treat Afghan children

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wounded in the war.

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Impact of the War on Afghan Women: State is working with private groups active on Afghanistan (Freedom House and the Afghan Resistance Relief Center) to disseminate news articles which address how the war has affected Afghan women's lives and families.

THIRD WORLD

We need to concentrate more in the coming months on efforts to expand public interest in the Afghanistan war in the Third World, where the Soviets have the most potential to make headway with their so-called "peace offensive."

Initially, we plan the following effort to complement ongoing (mainly USIA) programs:

Third World Media: USIA is exploring how to generate more publicity on the war in usually low-interest areas such as Africa and Latin American. Specifically, USIA will look into preparing programs on Afghanistan for African radio stations and supplying USIS reading rooms with Afghanistan-related books, articles and other materials. State will check on

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whether countries which receive wounded Afghans for medical treatment are agreeable to publicizing these activities.

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AID PROGRAM

An important element of the Administration's Afghanistan policy is increasing humanitarian and other support to the Afghan people -- those inside Afghanistan as well as the resistance and the refugees in Pakistan. The goal is to prevent depopulation of the Afghan countryside and to strengthen the administrative capabilities of the Alliance who administer the various aid programs inside Afghanistan. Again, by sustaining the Afghan people, who support the resistance, we exact costs on the Soviet occupation.

Pertinent aspects of the aid program include the following:

International Support for the Resistance: State is in the process of approaching friendly governments to urge them to increase humanitarian support to the resistance Alliance and to increase their political dialogue with the resistance Alliance. In this regard, State has prepared a paper to use with these governments outlining what the USG is doing what more could be done by them.

Aid Program: The Aid program for War-Affected Afghans has been

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These efforts have just begun and, thus far, comprise the following activities:

Media Project: USIA has contracted with Boston University to provide training to Afghans in filming and basic journalistic skills. _____ Afghans have completed training thus far. _____ more are expected to receive training over the next 90 days. The object of the program is to increase the amount of film and news coming out of Afghanistan and disseminate it to the international media.

IV Program: USIA has recently made \$500,000 available for an Afghan International Visitors program. (some details to be provided by USIS)

Book Program: As part of its new book program for Afghans, USIA will translate selected publications into Dari and Pashto. The first item will be the Helsinki Watch booklet "To Win the War: Afghanistan's Other War." The American Center in Peshawar, in its effort to serve the Afghan community, is also developing a special reference section on Afghanistan and U.S. policy.

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**Needs some
fleshing out
by USIA*

Student Exchange: USIA will develop a student exchange program
for immediate implementation.

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